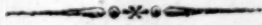


12636

C. Jones
1802

THE FALL OF BABYLON.
:
A
S E R M O N.

BY
WILLIAM MOSELEY.



Price One Shilling.



THE FALL OF BABYLON;
OR,
*The Harmony between Prophecy and Providence, in the
Rise, Duration, and Destruction of Antichrist.*

A
S E R M O N,
DELIVERED TO
THE INDEPENDENT CONGREGATION,
LONG BUCKBY, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE.

In which is considered,
THE OPINIONS OF
THE REV. DR. VALPY, AND E. KING, ESQ.

BY WILLIAM MOSELEY. *K*

"And the fifth Angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast;
"and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues
"for pain."
ST. JOHN.

L O N D O N;

Printed for the AUTHOR, by T. CHAPMAN, No. 151, Fleet-street;
fold also by W. BUTTON, Paternoster-row;
and J. KNOTT, Lombard-street.

1799.

*** *The Profits to be devoted to the Use of a Sunday School.*



THE FALL OF BABYLON.

A

S E R M O N.

REV. xvi. 19. LATTER PART.

AND GREAT BABYLON CAME IN REMEMBRANCE BEFORE
GOD, TO GIVE UNTO HER THE CUP OF THE WINE OF THE
FIERCENESS OF HIS WRATH.

THE pages of history are crowded with interesting events ; but with none more interesting than have transpired of late. Within the last few years, Europe has been the theatre of the most extraordinary transactions : transactions that have no less confounded the sagacity of the philosopher, than baffled the schemes of the statesman. Of these events, no one is more worthy a religious regard, than the FALL of ROME.^(a) A close connection subsisting be-

(a) Whatever political attachments we may have formed, we cannot justify robbery and rapine, though carried on under the specious pretence of revenging national insult, or planting the tree of liberty among slaves. The means by which Rome has fallen, none can justify, but the event we must all approve.

B

tween

tween this and Revelation, renders it a proper subject for our present reflection. For calling your attention to it, we make no apology. If any is necessary; it is because we have not done it, with our brethren in the establishment, before. (*b*)

The connexion between Prophecy, and Providence, is ever interesting; but it is peculiarly so at the present period. And embracing this opportunity, as appropriate to our purpose, we shall endeavour to point out the agreement between the predictions of Scripture, and the rise, duration, and fall of BABYLON, or ROME.

Before we proceed to illustrate these points, we shall make a few preliminary observations.

First, National calamities form a part of the great plan of Providence. All things are regulated, according to a wise and equitable scheme, previously settled. No wise man enters upon an important undertaking, without first sitting down to count the cost. No architect begins to raise a mansion, before he has fixed upon his plan; and well adjusted every part. And does

(*b*) See Wrangham's Sermon on the Fall of Rome; and Dr. Valpy's Sermon at the Consecration of the Colours of the Reading Association.

the great Creator, act with less wisdom ? “ He worketh all things after the council of his own will.” (c) “ Every event is immediately under his controul. He changeth times and seasons ; he removeth kings ; and setteth up kings : he giveth wisdom unto the wise, and knowledge to them that know understanding. He revealeth the deep and secret things, he knoweth what is in the darkness, and the light dwelleth with him.” (d) There is nothing deficient ; nothing redundant in Divine Providence. “ The Lord of Hosts hath sworn, saying, surely as I have thought, so shall it come to pass ; as I have purposed, so shall it stand.” (e)

It follows ; that the destruction of Babylon, was as necessary a part of Providence, as the restoration of the Jews ; the destruction of Jerusalem, as the establishment of Christianity ; and the overthrow of Papal tyranny, as the victories of a Duncan, or a Nelson.

Secondly, Some national events are the subjects of prophecy.

The ends to be answered by prophecy, are, a display of the perfections of Deity ; a demon-

(c) Eph. i. 11. (d) Dan. ii. 21, 22. (e) Isa. xiv. 24.

stration of the moral government of God ; and a confirmation of the inspiration of the sacred volume. These ends can be answered by the revelation of a few grand transactions. It would be unreasonable therefore to expect more than we find in Scripture. Nineveh, Babylon, Tyre, Egypt, and Jerusalem, have all been the subject of prophecy, and have all shared the exact fate predicted. (e) The power of Antichrist, the persecutions of the Church, the Reformation, the revolution in France, and the calamities in Italy ; (f) have all likewise been the subjects of prophetic foresight.

Thirdly. In prophecy, the proper names of persons, and places, are not *always* used ; but sometimes the names of persons, and places, which bear some strong resemblance to those designed. In many instances proper names have been used. Cyrus was foretold by name. (g) Babylon, Nineveh, Tyre, Egypt, and Jerusalem, were plainly mentioned. On other occasions, comparisons have been employed. Babylon was compared to a lion ; Persia to a bear ;

(e) Bishop Newton on the Prophecies. Ed. 9. in 2 vol.

(f) Rev. xvii. 13.—vi. 9.—xii. 7.—xiv. 6—9.—xi. 13.—xvi. 10.

(g) Isaiah xli. 1.

Macedonia to a leopard ; Rome to a dreadful and terrible beast without a name ; Cyrus to a ram ; and Alexander to a goat. (*b*) In other instances, the names of persons, of similar characters, and places of like description, have been substituted for the proper. Thus Christ is called David, both by Jeremiah and Hosea ; (*i*) and John the Baptist, was called Elijah. (*k*) And in our text, Babylon is mentioned ; but Rome is meant. That is evident.—First, Because what is said, cannot be applied to Babylon, nor to any other place, beside Rome. Babylon was destroyed, many years before St. John's time ; and had become the habitation of doleful creatures, of satyrs, of dragons, and of the wild beast of the desert. (*l*) Nor has there ever been another place found, to which the description will tolerably apply.—Secondly, What is said of Babylon, and the beast, directly agree with the situation and circumstances of Rome. The beast has “ seven heads and ten horns ;” the well-known marks of that great city : “ The seven heads,” alluding to the seven mountains

(*b*) Dan. vii. 4, 7.—viii. 20, 21. (*i*) Jerem. xxx. 9. Hosea iii. 5. (*k*) Mat. iv. 5. (*l*) Isaiah xlii. 21, 22.

whereon Rome is situated ; and the seven forms of government which successively prevailed there. " The ten horns," signify the ten kingdoms, into which the Roman Empire was divided. (*m*) In short, every characteristic mentioned, minutely accords with Rome : as its tyranny, blasphemy, pride, cruelty, and many other particulars.—Thirdly, Divines of different persuasions, (*n*) countries, and ages ; agree, that by the beast, and Babylon, we are to understand Rome. " By Babylon," says Bishop Newton, " was meant Rome, as all authors, of all ages and countries agree : but it was not prudent to denounce the destruction of Rome in open and direct terms : it was for many wise reasons done covertly, under the name of Babylon ; which was the great idolatres of the earth ; and the

(*m*) Bishop Newton, Vol. II. 274.

(*n*) Certissimum est nomine Babylonis—Romam urbem significari. Baronius ad Ann. 45. Johannes in Apocalypsi passim Romam vocat Babylonem.—Et aperte colligitur ex cap. xvii. Apocalypsis. Bellarmin. de Rom. Pontif. Lib. III. cap. 13. &c. Vide B. Newton, Vol. II. p. 310. Note E. Poli synopsis. Vol. V. p. 1936. Turretini Theologia. Vol. IV. De necessaria recessione nostra ab ecclesia Romana. Diput. 5. p. 144.

enemy

enemy of the people of God in former, as Rome has been in latter times." (o)

That *Rome* is meant, is then universally allowed; but divines are not equally agreed that *Rome christian* is intended. Dr. Hammond, the Bishop of Meaux, and others, suppose *heathen* Rome to be designed. But this is inadmissible for the following reasons. First, John "saw the beast rise up out of the sea." Heathen Rome had risen, and been established several hundred years before his time. This being prophetical, and not historical, cannot be considered as referring to the Roman Empire then subsisting; but to a form of government afterwards to rise; and no new form of government ever rose, after heathen Rome was broken to pieces by the barbarians; till the beast ascended to power. Secondly, This will appear still clearer, if you consider, the description given of the beast, will apply only to christian Rome. The time allowed for the continuance of the beast, will not apply to heathen Rome. Heathen Rome did not last 400 years after this prophecy; but power was give to the beast 1260

(o) B. Newton, Vol. II. p. 294.

years. Besides, if heathen Rome were meant, it ought to have been totally destroyed.(p) In many other particulars the description will not agree to heathen Rome ; while it strictly conforms in the most minute circumstances to Rome christian. Thirdly, John's astonishment at the sight of the Harlot, is a further confirmation. " And when I saw her, I wondered (says the Apostle) with great admiration." (q) But why so, if it were heathen Rome, where John himself had been persecuted? Surely he could not be astonished that heathens, given up to every vice, should afflict the church. But he might well be astonished, that the Christian Church should intoxicate herself with the blood of the Saints. Lastly, In support of this sentiment, we have the majority of Protestant Divines. But very few have held the contrary, while Usher, Durham, Pool, Goodwin, Mede, Lowman, Dodderidge, Gill, Newton, and many others, have supported this.

Viewing every national event, as part of the grand scheme of Providence ; believing the troubles of Italy, to be subjects of divine pre-

(p) Poli Synopsis, Vol. V. p. 1937. (q) Rev. xvii. 6.

diction ;

dition; and convinced, that Rome is the Babylon of St. John; we proceed to show the connexion between Scripture prophecy, and the rise, duration and fall of Popery.

First. The rise of Popery. This is noticed by three of the sacred penmen: By Daniel, "I considered the horns, and behold there came up among them another little horn,—in this horn, were eyes, like the eyes of man; and a mouth speaking great things." "And I beheld, and the same horn, made war with the saints; and prevailed against them." "And he shall speak great words, against the Most High; and shall wear out the saints of the Most High; and think to change times, and laws." (r) And the King shall do according to his will; and he shall exalt himself, and magnify himself above every god; and shall speak marvellous things against the God of gods. Neither shall he regard—the desire of women nor regard any god: for he shall magnify himself above all." (s) The same was foretold by Paul. "For that day shall not come, unless their come a falling away first, and that Man of

(r) Dan. vii. 8, 21, 25.

(s) Ch. xi. 36, 37.

sin be revealed, that son of perdition; who opposeth, and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God." (1) St. John gives a similar view of the same character. "And I stood upon the sand of the sea, and saw a beast rise up out of the sea; having seven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blasphemy." "And there was given unto him a mouth speaking great things and blasphemies." "And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God." "And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them." (2) These passages clearly relate to but one object; and in several instances the same words are used; and through the whole descriptions, we perceive the same monster appearing before the eyes of each writer. And who was this, but Antichrist? The passages are applicable to no other; and to him they are strictly applicable.

First, They agree to no other, Attempts have been made, to force an application of these

(1) 2 Theff. ii. 3, 4.

(2) Rev. xiii. 1. 5—7.

prophecies to others. Junius, Polanus, Grotius, and Collins, have applied those of Daniel to Antiochus Epiphanes. (x) The man of sin, Grotius conceives to be Caligula, the Roman Emperor. Hammond supposes Simon Magus intended. And Whitby, the Jews, who either revolted from the faith, or the Roman Empire. (y) The beast of the Revelations, with no less impropriety, has been applied to the Devil, to heathen Rome, and the Turkish Empire. (z) The absurdity of the first application, immediately appears, if you consider, that the little horn was to continue till the coming of Christ to judgment; (a) and that Antiochus Epiphanes was dead above a hundred years before his incarnation. That the Man of sin was not Caligula, must be clear, if you remember that he never embraced christianity, and therefore could not be an Apostate. Nor was "he ever seated in the temple of God, and there worshipped." And that it could not be Simon Magus, is no less evident; for he had been

(x) Poli Synopsis in loco. B. Newton, Vol. I. p. 253.

(y) Grotius, Hammond and Whitby, in loco.

(z) Poli Synopsis, and Gill on Rev. xiii.

(a) Dan. vii, 21, 22—26.

"revealed"

“revealed” many years before the prophecy was delivered. (b) On the application of the beast to the Devil, to the Turkish Empire, and heathen Rome, it is unnecessary to say any thing; having already shewn, that both Papists and Protestants agree that Rome is intended.

Secondly, These passages, while applicable to no other, contain a just description of the Roman Pontiffs exhibiting these four prominent features—Blasphemy—Incomparable arrogance—Unnatural abstinence—and Unprovoked cruelty.

Blasphemy. “The little horn speaks great things, and marvellous things, against the Most High.” “The beast opens his mouth, and blasphemes the Most High.” And what can be greater blasphemy than the titles claimed by the Popes: Infallible Judge; Universal Bishop; Sovereign of Kings, and Disposer of Kingdoms; Vicegerent of Christ, and God upon Earth?

Incomparable arrogance, is another feature. “The horn exalted, and magnified himself, above all that is called God.” “Nor did he regard any God, for he magnified himself above

(b) Bp. Newton, Vol. II. 89, 99.

all." The Man of sin also, " opposeth, and exalteth himself, above all that is called God, or that is worshiped ; so that he as God, sitteth in the temple of God ; shewing himself that he is God." The same character is given of the beast. (c) The arrogance of the pontifical chair, strictly corresponds with the description here given. " As soon as a Pope is chosen, he is clothed with the pontifical robes, and crowned and placed upon the altar, and the cardinals come and kiss his feet ; which ceremony is called *adoration*." (d) " The Pope makes himself equal, and even superior to God, in affecting divine titles, attributes, and honours ; in assuming a power of dispensing with the immutable laws of nature and the gospel ; in substituting for the commandment of God, the traditions of men ; in treading upon the altar of God at his inauguration, and making the table of the Lord his footstool, and in that posture receiving the *adoration* of his Cardinals." (e)

Unnatural abstinence, is a third characteristic. " Not regarding the desire of women." " For-

(c) Rev. xiv. 15. (d) Bp. Newton, Vol. II. p. 284.

(e) Idem 361. Turrett, Vol. IV. De Necess. &c. Disp. 7. p. 188, 190.

bidding

bidding to marry." It is notorious to all, that for centuries, marriage has been prohibited among the priests of Antichrist.

We have a fourth mark, *Unprovoked cruelty*. "The horn made war with the Saints, and prevailed against them." "To the beast it was given," also, "to make war with the Saints, and to overcome them." Our hearts still bleed, with the remembrance of the thousands slaughtered by Papal cruelty. The vallies of Piedmont, the fields of the Netherlands, the streets of Paris, and the rivers of Ireland, are still stained with innocent blood. Heathen Rome, destroyed its thousands; but Christian Rome, its tens of thousands.

These prophecies, corresponding with no other character in the page of history, and so minutely corresponding with the Roman Pontiff, are therefore justly referred to him.

Secondly. The connexion between Prophecy and the duration of Antichrist, comes next under consideration. Prophetical language is obscure, from the allusions made to customs now unknown; from the style generally employed; and from the distance betwixt the predictions and their accomplishment. The numerical language

guage employed to point out the time allotted for Antichrist's reign, however clear in itself, is obscure as to its commencement. Daniel and John agree in the time allowed for his continuance; and, which is worthy of notice, use the same language. "They shall be given," says Daniel, "into his hands, until a time, and times, and the dividing of times." (*f*) Again, in the 12th chapter, "It shall be for a time, times, and a half." St. John says, "And the holy city shall they tread under foot, forty, and two months." "And I will give power to my two witnesses, and they shall prophecy a thousand two hundred and three-score days." (*g*) The woman having fled into the wilderness, is fed for "a thousand, two hundred, and three-score days." "She is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time." (*b*) "Power was given unto the beast, to continue, forty, and two months." These different forms of expression, are designed for the same term of years. And computing by the ancient Chaldean years, of 360 days, they amount to 1260 years. (*i*) "For

(*f*) Dan. vii. 25. (*g*) Rev. xi. 2, 3. (*b*) Ch. xii. 6, 14. (*i*) Ch. xiii. 5. Vide Lowman on Rev. Sec. 9, p. 104, 106, and Gill on Rev. ch. xi. 2.

a time is a year ; and a time, and times, and the dividing of time, or half a time, are three years and a half ; and three years and a half, are forty-two months, or 1260 days ; and 1260 days, in prophetic style, are 1260 years." (k) And from a comparifon of these passages, thus explained, we conclude, that this will be the period of the churches great affliction, and the reign of Antichrift. (l)

Thus far we have met with but little difficulty ; in what remains we may expect more. Commentators are in general agreed, that Antichrift is to reign 1260 years ; but they are by no means agreed, when his reign commenced. A celebrated Author, (m) has been at great trouble to prove, that the Pope was not a little horn ; and that his reign did not commence till he became a temporal Prince ; which he conceives, was, in the years 756, when Pepin wrested the Exarchate of Ravenna from the Lombards ; and made it over to the Pope and his fucceffors. Another author, no lefs celebrated, (n)

(k) Bp. Newton, Vol. II. p. 373, 374. Lowman on Rev. p. 106. (l) Gill on Rev. xiii. 5. Dodderidge's

Fam. Exp. Rev. xii. Note d. (m) Lowman, Pref. to Paraph. on Rev. (n) Bp. Newton, Vol. II. p. 375.

has fixed the rise of Antichrist in the year 727; when Rome, and the Roman Dukedom, came from the Greeks to the Roman Pontiff. Fleming, Sir Isaac Newton, and Dodderidge, unite also, in dating the rise of Antichrist from the time of his temporal exaltation. If his rise is to be reckoned from the time he became a temporal Prince, then his temporal reign must last 1260 years. For if his rise is not to be reckoned till he was possessed of secular authority, then his fall must be when this power is taken away. (o) That the principle upon which these Authors argued, and the data they chose, were wrong, time has proved. For according to Fleming, Lowman, and others, he ought to have possessed his temporal power till the year 2016. And according to Bishop Newton, till the year 1987. Mede, and those who have followed him, have fixed his rise much earlier. Mede dates his rise in the year 456. And according to this, he must have fallen in the year 1716. Fleming, Lowman, and Newton, were in one extreme, and Mede in the other. Many arguments might be produced to prove the Pope

(o) Lowman. Rev. Sec. ix. p. 106, who himself allows this mode of reasoning.

was a little horn, or horn of little power, before he became a temporal Prince. But these are all superseded. Existing circumstances put it beyond a doubt. "His dominion is taken from him." And if this was necessary to constitute him a horn at first, it was necessary to continue him one to the last. And upon this principle, he could not have been deprived of his secular authority for 1260 years after he received it; which being in the eighth century, he must have continued his temporal domination two hundred years longer.

If we are not to date his rise, according to Mede, from the time Genferic took Rome; nor according to Fleming, or Newton, when the Pope was raised to princely honours, in what year can it be fixed? This is an important question, and difficult to answer. What we shall advance, therefore, will be with caution; presuming no farther than evidence shall appear to lead us.

We have seen that the year 456, was not the proper epoch. We have also proved, that it is not to be reckoned from the period he rose to temporal authority. Driven from these by stubborn facts, we must look out for the most memorable

memorable period between them. And what period was so memorable as the year 606? The events of this year were such, that many learned and judicious authors fixed upon it, long before time had proved the others to be erroneous. Many superstitious practices were now introduced. Pagan customs were incorporated with Christian doctrines. The priesthood was awfully debased, by ignorance, arrogance, avarice, and sensuality. In short, the Church was little better than an heathen temple, and the priests of God resembled the sacrificers to Venus. This dreadful apostacy was the harbinger of the Man of Sin. And accordingly we find, that when his way was thus prepared, he was, agreeable to Paul, revealed. (p) Long had he been struggling for universal power, and with it he was now invested.

Phocas, a tyrant of the first order, by the entreaty of Pope Boniface III. deprived the Bishop of Constantinople of his title as universal Bishop, which he had long assumed, and conferred it exclusively on the Roman Pontiff. The Bishops of Rome and Constantinople, had for years

(p) 2 Theff. ii. 3.

contested this honour ; till now it was not decided : and from this time the Bishop of Rome was raised above all others, and his supremacy established by imperial authority. (q) This was the most interesting transaction which concerned the Church for centuries. It lies between the extremes of Mede and Fleming, and I humbly conceive, that from this year we are to date the rise of Antichrist. My reasons for fixing on this year are—

First, Most celebrated authors have either, following Mede, dated his rise from the time the Pope became a temporal Prince, or commenced his reign from this year. Time has demonstrated, Mede was too early, Fleming and Newton too late. And as these are the only three periods that have been, or could well be fixed upon; and two of them have proved false, the third still remaining, is probably the true. One of these, I presume, must be right ; and the year 606 the epoch from which we are to reckon.

Secondly, From this period, the state of the Church, and the character of the Roman Pon-

(q) Mosheim, Eccles. Hist. Vol. II. p. 169. Bishop of Meaux, Univ. Hist. Vol. I. p. 159.

tiffs, fully answer the description of Antichrist. According to Paul, the Church had awfully fallen away. The apostacy was such, that there was a striking resemblance between the Christian Church and an Heathen Temple. Images, bones, saints, and the relicts of the cross, were *worshipped*. The power of relicts, to cure diseases of body and mind, was boldly asserted. Burning tapers at the tombs of the deceased, and the purification of departed souls by fire, were received as Christian rites. That the remission of sins might be secured by offerings to the Church, and presents to the Monks, was industriously circulated among the people. The churches were made the sanctuaries of the vilest profligates and murderers. The power of working miracles was asserted. The celibacy of the clergy was in high repute. The Monks, a numerous, popular, and powerful class, abandoned themselves to every vice; and under pretence of sanctity, nursed men in sin, and robbed them of their wealth. In short, "The Church was at this time," says Mosheim, "truly deplorable; neither bishops, presbyters, deacons, nor even the cloistered monks, were exempt from the general contagion, as appears from the unanim-

ous confession of all the writers of this century that are worthy of credit. In those very places which were consecrated to the advancement of piety and the service of God, there was little else to be seen than ghostly ambition, insatiable avarice, pious frauds, intolerable pride, and a supercilious contempt of the natural rights of the people, with many other vices still more enormous.”(r)

By the authority the Pope had lately acquired, he was now raised to such power, that the jealousy of several Emperors, Princes, and whole Nations was inflamed against him, and they strongly opposed his encroachments. The Monks, after flying to Emperors and Princes, applied to him for more complete security. This they obtained, “and the imperious Pontiffs,” says Mosheim, “always fond of exerting their authority, exempted, by degrees, the monastic orders from the jurisdiction of the bishops.” In return for his kindness, they represented him, among the ignorant multitude, “a sort of God.” Nor was this peculiar to the Monks, for Ennodius before had asserted, “that

(r) Mosh. Eccl. Hist. Vol. II. p. 125, 171—176.

the Roman Pontiff was constituted Judge in the place of God, which he filled as the vicegerent of the Most High." (s) How clearly is Antichrist seen in all these things. The falling way; the man of sin; the horn of little power; the mouth speaking great things and blasphemies; with many other characteristics of the great corrupter of Christianity, and enemy of Christ.

Thirdly, This epoch agrees best with the time when, according to prophecy, he was to be revealed. The rise of Antichrist was to be preceded by three memorable events: The dissolution of the Roman Empire; the establishment of a different form of government in Italy; and the division of the Empire into ten Kingdoms. The existence of the Roman Empire prevented his rise; its destruction was necessary for his manifestation. This event did not take place till the year 566. Odoacer deposed Augustulus the last Emperor, in the year 476; but Odoacer and his successors assuming the title of Kings of Italy, the form of government was not altered. This was therefore to be considered as a continuance of the old government, rather than

(s) Idem 113. Turrett. Theolog. Vol. IV. De Necess. Seceff. nostra ab Eccles. Rom. Disp. vii. p. 188, 189.

the establishment of a new one, which did not take place till A. D. 566, or 568, when the Emperor of the East became master of Rome, and having abolished all former civil offices, constituted a Duke of Rome, tributary to the exarchate of Ravenna. Rome had never experienced this form of government before : and this I conceive to be the other, which in the Apostle's days, was " not yet come, and when he cometh he must continue a short time." (t)

The exact time when the ten Kings arose cannot be determined. Some date their rise in the fifth century ; others between the fourth and sixth ; and others not till the eighth. (u) " They were to receive power, as Kings, *one hour*, with the beast ;" that is, they were to rise about the same time. Though Bishop Newton, to accommodate his own hypothesis concerning the beast, will not allow they properly rose before the eighth, yet he acknowledges, " kingdoms they might be before." (x) The truth lies between the extremes. It is pretty clear they rose by the seventh century ; and as the latitude of a prophetic hour is allowed for their rise and

(t) Bp. Newton, Vol. II. p. 320. (u) Idem, Vol. I. p. 255, 256. (x) Idem, Vol. II. p. 322.

the rise of the beast, it is not necessary to know within ten years the establishment of the former, to ascertain that of the latter. From the whole it appears evident, that Mede's epoch was too early; for "he who letteth," was not removed for some years afterwards; and Fleming's and Newton's too late, for the ten kings and the beast, were to rise together; (y) and the ten Kings rose long before the eighth century.

Fourthly, Recent events have rendered this epoch more probable than any other. We have seen the Pope despoiled of his temporal authority; but he still fills the Papal chair. Secular authority was not necessary to constitute him a horn of little power at first, and taking this away does not terminate his reign. (z) There is little prospect of his restoration to temporal power; but whether the present Pontiff, or some of his successors, may not take, for a short time, the pontifical chair again in Rome, is not

(y) Idem. "They rise and fall," says Newton, "together with the beast."

(z) His secular domination has lasted but 1042 years, which is 218 short of 1260. This is an incontestible proof that his reign is not to be measured by his possession of temporal power.

yet

yet absolutely certain. However, the judgments with which the great City has been lately visited, are probably included in the fifth vial, "And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain." (a) Mede, Lowman, and Bishop Newton, unite in saying this refers to a remarkable period, in which the power and authority of Antichrist shall be diminished. (b) His power and authority are diminished. His very throne has been visited in wrath; but he is still alive, and still maintains his ecclesiastical honours. The wounds, however, which he has received, are deadly, but his end is not yet. The vial may be 50 or 60 years running out; during which time, it is probable he will continue to experience a vast variety of painful providences: and after suffering many heavy judgments, will be finally swept away. Is it likely that this event is, according to Fleming, above 200 years distant? Do not existing circumstances strongly favour the supposition, that not more than 70 years are yet to come?

(a) Rev. xvi. 10.
in loco.

(b) Mede, Lowman, and Newton

Fifthly,

Fifthly, We are not alone, many wise and good men have fixed upon the same data. Men are not infallible—their opinions are not decisive—but still, where we cannot from the nature of the subject expect demonstration, we ought to pay some deference to the sentiments of the wise. Among the learned who have favoured this opinion, we may mention Professor Turretine, Dr. Gill, Dr. Bellamy, Messrs. Brown, Parker, Maddocks, Ryland; and even Bishop Newton, conscious that this epoch had many things in its favour, says, “Very remarkable too it is, that Mohammed first contrived his imposture in the year 606, the very same year wherein the tyrant Phocas made a grant of the supremacy to the Pope; and this might incline one to think that the 1260 years of the reign of Antichrist are to be dated from this time.”(c)

For these reasons I am disposed to think with the Authors already mentioned, that the 1260 years reign of Antichrist, are to be dated from the time Phocas raised the Roman Pontiff above all his fellows; by constituting him (d) uni-

(c) Newton, Vol. II. 377.

(d) Turret. Theo. De Necess. Secess. nostra ab Eccles. Rom. Vol. IV. Disp. vii. p. 180.

versal Bishop, Head of the whole Church, and spiritual Monarch. (e)

Having

(e) Dr. Valpy, in his Sermon at the Consecration of the Colours of the Reading Association, and Edward King, Esq. in his Signs of the Times, have fixed the rise of Antichrist in the year 538, the year in which Vigilius purchased the Popedom. Reckoning 1260 years from this epoch, they find the destruction of the Man of sin in 1798. This coincidence may appear flattering to many; but, with deference to the superior talents of these Authors, I confess they have little weight with me, for the following reasons: I. Vigilius's purchasing the Popedom, was not such an important or base transaction, as to be the decided characteristic of the rise of Antichrist. Many chronologers and historians pass it by without even mentioning it; and even Mosheim, though Dr. V. has referred to him for a particular account of this event, does not notice it, as I can find, in the sixth century, though he mentions several other things concerning him. The act was bad, it is true, but if purchasing ecclesiastical preferment constituted the rise of the Man of sin, many Antichrists have risen since, in the reformed churches, as well as Romish. II. He who prevented his revelation was not removed till some years after 538. This we have before confirmed from Newton, who proves clearly, that the old government was not destroyed, and a new one introduced till the years 566, or 568. Until he who let, was taken out of the way, that wicked one was not to be revealed, 2 Theff. ii. 7, 8. And according to this, it is evident, his rise cannot be dated till after the year 566. III. In the year 538, and for several years after, the Bishop of Rome possessed

Having thus considered his rise, and duration, we come, in the third place, to make some
 observa-

possessed no more power, nor inherited any more glory, than the Pontiff of Constantinople. So that if Antichrist had then risen, he had risen at Constantinople as well as at Rome; and there were two beasts instead of one. Mosheim and others clearly shew, that both these Bishops were upon equal footing, and that each strove in vain, till the year 606, to rise above the other. See Mosheim, Cent. 6. Part II. Chap. ii. And Cent. 7, Part II. Chap. ii. It happens particularly unfortunate for the abettors of this epoch, that Vigilius was not only banished by the Emperor Justinian, but obliged to submit even to the Bishops of Africa and Illyricum. They obliged him to retract his *judicatum*, by which he had condemned the *three chapters*; and separated themselves from his communion, refusing to acknowledge him even one of their brethren. Mosheim, Cent. 6, Part II. Chap. iii. iv. My last reason for rejecting this data is, Antichrist is not yet destroyed. Upon Dr. Valpy's and Mr. King's plan, temporal domination was not necessary to constitute Antichrist; and if it were not necessary to constitute him at first, why should we suppose he is destroyed, because this is taken from him? He has lost his secular power; but all Catholic Communities acknowledge his authority now in ecclesiastical matters, as much as before he left Rome. He possesses ecclesiastical authority, though his temporal is gone. It appears therefore inconsistent to suppose, that the taking away his temporal power constitutes his ruin, when its possession was not necessary to constitute his rise. Besides, recent calamities only make a part of the judge-
 ments

observations on his fall. The destruction of Antichrist is as certain as his existence. The scriptures are as clear and decisive upon this, as upon his elevation and continuance. "I beheld," says Daniel, "even till the beast was slain and his body given to the burning flames : And they shall take away his dominion to consume and destroy it to the end." (f) "Then," says Paul, "shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord shall consume with the breath of his mouth, and destroy with the brightness of his coming." (g) St. John is very large and diffusive. In the 14th chapter he describes the judgment of the beast in general terms. In the 15th and 16th chapters they are more particu-

ments predicted. A great variety of calamities are threatened ; part of which have come, and part have not ; which are to precede his complete ruin. Late events are the commencement of the fifth vial ; this must run out before the end of his reign will come. He is doomed to misery, disgrace, and the gradual loss of power ; but his final overthrow is yet distant. Our authors have, perhaps, mistaken the judgments which precede his ruin, for the thing itself.—And it is clear, and generally acknowledged, that the 1260 years reach down to the time of his total destruction. Vide Mede, on the Fall of Antichrist, or the Meaning of the Seven Vials.

(f) Dan. vii. 11, 26.

(g) 2 Theff. ii. 8.

larly

larly represented, by the seven last plagues, or vials of God's wrath. In the 17th and 18th chapters, the complete destruction of Rome, and the total overthrow of Antichrist, are described in language similar to that which the prophets used concerning Babylon. From the whole that is said by these different inspired writers, we learn, that the destruction of Rome is to be accomplished by three different means, operating at three different times. (*b*) By preaching the Gospel—By the horns wresting from the beast his secular power—And by burning the great City, and casting the beast into hell.

First, By preaching the Gospel. “ And there followed another angel, saying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen.” (*i*) By this angel, all agree, we are to understand the ministry of the Gospel, by which the ruin of Rome was commenced. Ep. Newton says, “ As by the first angel calling upon men to worship God, we understand the opposers of the worship of images, in the eighth and ninth centuries ; so by this se-

(*b*) Turret. as above, p. 180, says, “ Duæ enim estæ periodi notantur destructionis ejus a Spiritu S. &c.”

(*i*) Rev. xiv. 8.

cond angel proclaiming the fall of mystic Babylon or Rome, we understand, particularly Peter Valdo, and those who concurred with him in the Waldenses and Albigenses, who were the first heralds, as I may say, of this proclamation, as they first of all, in the twelfth century, pronounced the Church of Rome to be the apocalyptic "Babylon, the mother of harlots, and the abominations of the earth;" and for this cause, not only departed from her communion themselves, but engaged great numbers also to follow their example, and laid the first foundation of the Reformation. Rome thus began to fall; and as the ruin of Babylon was completed by degrees, so likewise will that of Rome; and the holy Confessors and Martyrs first paved the way to it." (k)

Secondly, The destruction of the beast is to be promoted by the horns wresting his secular power out of his hands. "And the judgment shall sit, and they shall take away his domi-

(k) Diff. Vol. II. p. 295. See also p. 296. Vide Lowman, Gill, and Mede in loco. The last author is particularly excellent upon this passage. Vide also 2 Theff. ii. 8. and Dodderidge, Gill and others in loco.

nion." (l) " And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the seat of the beast, and his kingdom was full of darkness, and they gnawed their tongues for pain." (m) " This is some calamity," says Newton, " that shall fall upon *Rome itself*, and shall darken and confound the whole Antichristian Empire." (n) " The extent, authority, power, and influence of his government," says Lowman, " were much diminished." (o) But no author, I have seen upon the passage, is by any means equal to Mede. " The fifth vial is to be poured out upon the *throne*, or seat of the beast ; that is, Rome itself.—Now, by this destruction of the City of Rome," says he, " the name of the Pope shall not *indeed utterly perish*, but from thenceforth he shall be despoiled of his glory and splendor, so that for grief they shall bite their tongues : in the mean time (notwithstanding) persevering still in their impenitency, their hearts being hardened, they abuse their grief to further blasphemy." (p) The 16th verse of the 17th chapter deserves attention :—" And the ten horns

(l) Dan. vii. 26. Vide Newton, Vol. II. p. 380. Poli Synopsis in loco, and Gill. (m) Rev. xvi. 10. (n) Diff, Vol. II. p. 307. (o) In loco. (p) Ibid.

which thou sawest upon the beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh and burn her with fire." This passage refers to the same thing as the preceding. "They shall hate the whore." Who? "The horns," her former favourites. "And make her desolate and naked." What can this mean, but spoiling her, of her secular dignity? "They shall *bate* her," that is, "they shall strip, and expose, and plunder her." (q) "They shall not only withdraw their protection from her, but shall use their power against her; shall strip her of her ornaments and her riches." (r) Can language point out more clearly than this, the secular destruction of the Man of Sin? And did ever any event better accord with a prediction, than recent events have with this? (s)

Thirdly,

(q) Bp. Newton, Vol. II, p. 323. There is a remarkable agreement between recent events and this language, which was written several years ago. (r) Lowman in loco. This remark is no less striking than the former.

(s) Bp. Newton's words are remarkable: "Rome will finally be destroyed by some of the Princes who have been reformed, or shall be reformed from Popery: and as the Kings of France have contributed greatly to her advancement,

Thirdly, The great city, and the beast, are to be totally destroyed. Hitherto we have only seen Rome falling. Its total destruction yet remains. The method, by which this is to be effected, was hinted by Daniel, and Paul, but is minutely pointed out by St. John. The 18th chapter of the Revelations is principally taken up in its description. The scene is painted in awful colours: the City is represented in flames, and her friends bitterly lamenting her ruin. "The Kings who had lived deliciously with her;"—"the merchants" who had enriched themselves by her traffic;—"the ship-masters and sailors" who had navigated her vessels, deeply affected with the sight; "stand afar off, weeping and wailing, and saying, Alas ! alas ! that great City, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold and precious stones and pearls ; for in one hour such great riches have come to nought. And when they saw the smoke of her burning, they cast dust upon their heads, weeping, and wailing, and saying, Alas ! alas ! that

ment, it is not impossible, nor improbable, that some time or other they may also be the principle authors of her destruction." Vol. II. p. 323.

D 2

great

great City, for in one hour is she made desolate." (i)

After this awful, but righteous visitation of heaven, on the seat of murder and corruption; according to the order of prophecy, we may expect the beast will collect all his forces, and make war upon Christ and his people; when by some unexpected, and perhaps unprecedented providence, he and the false prophet will be taken, and cast into a lake of fire burning with brimstone. (u)

The

(i) That the City will be totally destroyed, and never more be inhabited, is as clear as language can make it. Rev. xviii. 2. 21---23. Several passages hint, that this is to be effected by fires. Rev. xviii. 8, 9, 18. chap. xix. 3. Whether this will be by the flames of war, fire from heaven, or volcanic eruptions, we cannot determine. The soil about Rome is bituminous: and even at Rome there have been eruptions of subterraneous fires which have destroyed several buildings. Bp. Newton rather favours this opinion. Vol. II. p. 331. Lowman supposes it will be by the "fire, and sword, and all the calamities of war." Chap. xvii. 16. Gill favours the same sentiment, but supposes both may be employed. Rev. xviii. 8.

(u) Rev. xix. 19, 20. "The design here," says Mr. Daubuz, "is to show us, that Christ will not only destroy at last, the persons who at that time shall be in possession of what is signified by the beast, and false prophet; but also
utterly

The two former of these judgments have already visited Antichrist : the third still remains. When this will come we are not certain. There was an interval between the first and second, and we may expect a short one betwixt the second and third. At the appointed time it shall come. It is probable, at the end of the 1260 years, reckoned from the data before mentioned. At present, however, we can only speculate—"For the vision is yet for an appointed time, but at the end it shall speak and not lie : though it tarry, wait for it : because it will surely come, it will not tarry." It only remains now to improve the whole. And

First, The fulfilment of Prophecy, is a living witness to the truth of Christianity. This species of evidence has ever been considered of great weight. It is to the Church now, what miracles were of old. Miracles were then wrought to convince infidels, and confirm believers ; and prophecies are now fulfilling for the same purposes. We have seen "a tenth part of the City" fall, and in the concussion "the names

utterly extirpate the succession of tyranny and false prophecy for ever." Vide Lowman, in loco. Note k. Mede, on the Seventh Vial ; and Bp. Newton, Vol. II. p. 334.

of men destroyed.” (x) We have seen “ a vial poured out upon the seat of the beast,” and his followers “ gnawing their tongues for pain.” (y) We have seen the “ horns hate the whore, and make her desolate and naked.” (z) In a word, within a few years, we have witnessed a connexion betwixt prophecy and providence, as remarkable as in any preceding age. Where then is the force of the old objection—“ the prophecies were written after the events ?” If this had any weight once, it can have none now. Facts are stubborn things. We have read the prophecies many years ago. We know they have been upon record many centuries ; and now every newspaper contains details of their completion. Some have requested miracles, as the condition of giving up their scruples. Even this you have : for the most striking of miracles is the accomplishment of a series of scripture prophecies. And does not the state of Nineveh, Babylon, Jerusalem, France, the Jews, and Antichrist, all strictly accord with the prophecies, which were of old ?

(x) Rev. xi. 13. Gill in loco.

(y) Rev. xvi. 10. Mede on the Fifth Vial.

(z) Idem, xvii. 16. Dan. vii. 26.

Nor is this a tranſient miracle, ceasing as ſoon as performed ; but is permanent, and protracted through the courſe of many ages. It is not a miracle depending upon the report of others ; but is ſubject to your own inſpection. It is not a miracle exhibited before a few witneſſes only ; but is open to the examination of all mankind : And after addreſſing itſelf with a convincing power to many generations, is ſtill growing, is ſtill improving. What ſtronger miracle can you require for your conviction ? Or what will avail if this be found ineffectual ? Alas ! if you reject the evidence of prophecy, neither would you be perſuaded though one ſhould ariſe from the dead. (a)

Secondly, Antichriſt's fall from ſecular domination is a juſt cauſe for joy. The harlot is drunk with the blood of the ſaints. Thouſands and tens of thouſands have fallen by her cruelties. Of the Waldenſes, in about forty years, ſhe murdered not leſs than a million. By the diabolical Court of Inquiſition, in about thirty years, a hundred and fifty thouſand more. At a moderate computation, fifteen millions were

(a) Biſhop Newton, Vol. II. p. 411.

most cruelly tortured, and butchered by the Spaniards. In Queen Mary's reign were burnt, Archbishop Cranmer, four bishops, twenty-one ministers, eight private gentlemen, 184 artificers, fifty-five women, four children, besides many who died in prison. In Paris, within about three days, ten thousand were murdered, and at the same time, in different parts of France, not less than a hundred thousand more. And in Ireland, in cool blood, about a hundred and forty thousand were treated with the utmost barbarity, and then massacred. In the whole near seventeen millions have been murdered, besides many millions banished, imprisoned, and tormented. The destruction of the monster that has shed so much innocent blood, demands a song of the highest praise. He has been the terror of kings, the curse of mankind, and the murderer of the saints. But "his dominion is taken from him;" and the Saints rejoice at it. "I heard," says John, "a great voice of much people in Heaven, saying, Alleluia, salvation, and glory, and honour, and power, unto the Lord our God. For true and righteous are his judgments, for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with

with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand. And again they said, Alleluia, and her smoke rose up for ever and ever." If heaven rejoice in this event, how much rather ought we? "A voice came out of the throne saying, Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great." Let both priest and people praise him, saying, "Alleluia, for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth." (b)

Thirdly, The faithfulness of God to his word receives additional confirmation by recent transactions. Not a single word that was spoken of the antient Empires has failed. Every thing has been minutely fulfilled. Modern events are the accomplishment of antient predictions; and prove, as well as former circumstances, that "not a jot, or tittle of his word shall fail." And is God mindful of his word to the nations; and will he not be mindful of it to his people? If

(b) Rev. xix. 1—6. These expressions of joy, it is true, appear to follow the complete ruin of Antichrist, which at present we have not witnessed. But still, as we have reason to believe, the death-wound is given, and his final ruin not very distant, we may exult in the prospect as though it were already done.

he

he is faithful to his enemies, will he not to his friends? If he accomplishes all his threatened judgments, will he not accomplish all his promised mercies? If they who are out of Christ, shall never have cause to charge him with unfaithfulness; will they who are in Christ ever have reason to impeach his veracity? Shall the prayer of his people prove unavailing? Will he cease to succour the tempted who fly to him? To support the afflicted who trust in him? To comfort the dying Saint, who is interested in his love? Or, finally, complete the felicity of all the faithful? No. Sooner shall heaven and earth pass away, than he will suffer one tittle of his word to fail.



F I N I S.

Shortly will be Published,
A NEW EDITION
OF
TWO BRIEF ESSAYS,
ON
THE EVIDENCES OF CHRISTIANITY.

DESIGNED CHIEFLY FOR
THE YOUNG AND THE UNLEARNED.

BY W. MOSELEY.

A Christian is the highest Style of Man.

YOUNG.



